

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An automated volume license agreement ("AVLA") method and apparatus automates the management of volume license agreements ("VLA"). VLAs from different publishers and distributors are maintained on an AVLA Clearinghouse. The clearinghouse is accessible to the publishers, distributors, and customers over a secure network or the Internet. A corporate customer accesses the clearinghouse to obtain the latest rules embodied in a VLA in response to a purchaser's request to purchase a product sold under the VLA. An AVLA rules engine dynamically extracts the rules and applies them to the historical purchase data for the product that is compiled on the AVLA transaction database to obtain the latest volume discount pricing steps to which the purchaser is entitled. An AVLA pricing monitor, in turn, applies the latest volume discount step to generate current pricing information for display to the purchaser for her review prior to purchasing the requested product. This insures that the corporate purchaser is always presented with the lowest price available for each product that is purchased under a VLA. As a consequence, the role of the corporate reseller who physically monitors product purchases on behalf of corporations is reduced or eliminated. Distributors, publishers, and customers can communicate more rapidly and efficiently to negotiate and update their VLAs in response to changing market conditions.